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Ain't I a Woman?

a midwest newspaper of women's liberation

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Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514

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START NOW

Ain't I A Woman is committed to helping create revolutionary alternatives for women -- alternatives to the sexist, racist, imperialist Amerika which defines out-groups as objects, as not quite human. Blacks, Indians, people of the Third World, women -- all are out-groups. All are defined as objects.

Although the specific problems faced by the different oppressed groups are in many ways not comparable, all share this one burden. All are treated as things that can be ignored, brutalized, or even destroyed by the power elite.

There are all sorts of ways to destroy people short of killing their bodies. If the ruling elite can get them to accept a definition of themselves as naturally inferior, then a good part of their human potential has been destroyed, and they have unwittingly cooperated in their own destruction.

For centuries, whites fostered the belief in blacks and Third World peoples that they were inferior to the white races. Now, in this century, they have risen up and smashed that lie. For thousands of years, men have defined women as the inherently inferior sex; and now women are beginning to cast off that false and crippling self-definition.

What are the elements in the definition of women as inferior to men? Most of them center in the idea that they are sex objects first and human beings second. And even their human traits are defined in terms of their "feminine" characteristics, which means in terms of their bodies.

SEX SELLS -- and women have traditionally sold themselves for low wages. Who can blame us? Who thinks highly of a creature who lacks all the socially valued traits of mind, such as logical thinking, intelligence, and autonomy? No one -- and least of all, that creature herself. Traditional psychology and psychiatry (the sciences of mind and behavior) have urged woman to accept her immutably ordained sex role, and have defined that role as essentially being a breeding machine. They have told her she is weak, passive, full of motherly instincts, and best suited to remain in the home. They have defined women as "sick," if they dared rebel against such a cripplingly narrow definition.

Woman as sex object is supposed to sell herself into marriage. In order to do this, she is programmed to compete with her sisters so that she may be chosen to grace the home of one of her oppressors. Such competition pits individual against individual; it makes it almost impossible for women to recognize the social basis of their oppression, and to unite with their sisters against it. Once married, she is isolated psychologically from other women; her entire identity -- name, social status, reason for living -- is derived from her husband. Women who reject this loss of their personal autonomy are told there is something wrong with them -- that they are different, and people who are different are sick. It takes a very strong woman to break through this definition of what she ought to be, to realize that what is wrong is not in her head, but in an oppressive system that would have her be something other than what she can be.

SEX IS BIG BUSINESS. The media use women's bodies to sell products to men. They tell women how to sell themselves to the highest bidder, and then how to keep their buyer from discarding them for a younger and prettier model. With incredible cynicism they order women what to buy, what to cook, what to wear, what to eat, what not to eat, all in a manner that reinforces the narrow social definition of women, all in a manner precisely calculated to exploit women's insecurities. Hemlines going down? Then change your wardrobe -- for appearance defines a woman's being. Too fat? Starve yourself. Too thin? Eat. Too ugly? Cover up with pounds of expensive cosmetics. You are only an object, and if you are not a beautiful object, you have no value. The annual Miss Amerika cattle show parades tons of expensive beef before the eyes of an admiring nation, inviting all women to compare themselves to this year's best of breed.

Sex objects can't usually sell themselves for much on the job market -- long years of training in passivity and in non-competitiveness, in accepting a negative self-evaluation, make it hard to believe one is worth very much in the man's world. How can an object compete with a man? Why aren't you home with your family? (Yes, I know I ought to be.) Don't you know aggressive women are castrating bitches? (I'll try very hard to do more poorly than all the men.) Your kids will be delinquent! (And it will be all my fault.) Your husband will step out on you! (I will kill myself.) You won't get a husband! (I am worthless.) You're taking a job away from a man! (Men should come first.) You will get married/get pregnant/move away. (Then it is reasonable not to give me a decent job.)

Many women quite understandably find it hard to fight this jungle of restrictive definitions. Those who can usually pay a high price in psychological stress.

Men issue a lot of propaganda about the supreme importance of the wife-mother role. ("You are mother, companion, cook, nurse, chauffeur, gardener, teacher", etc. ad nauseum.) And all too many women blindly accept it. But the true value of these jobs can be seen in what they bring on the market, since in capitalist Amerika one's value is determined by the money one's skills can earn. Women who attempt to support themselves as domestics, baby-sitters, practical nurses and attendants, maids, scrubwomen, waitresses -- women who desperately need a decent wage -- are obviously of little value, since they are at the bottom of the wage scale.

By definition, an object is controlled by outside forces, not by itself. And that's why women are fighting to gain control over their own bodies, over their very lives. Only then will we have any value to ourselves. Even our bodies are not highly valued by men: if they were, we would never have been so casually used as experimental animals by the male scientists who developed the pill. If they were, we would never be denied the right to abortion on demand. (Is there any medical procedure denied to men on the grounds of sexual morality? Think about it!)

We believe that there must be a revolutionary transformation of Amerikan society before people can live humanly together. But each oppressed group must get themselves together, must make themselves strong NOW, or they will be left behind. People who have been brutalized into believing in their inferiority, people who have passively accepted becoming less than they can be -- these people must change, or they cannot make the revolution. Women must develop pride in themselves and in each other; women must identify with each other as members of an oppressed group. The time to start is now. The place to begin is where you are.

of women
by women
for women

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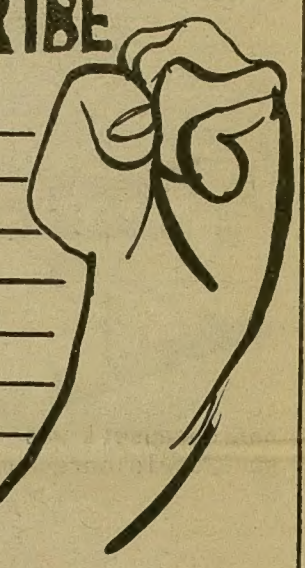

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You can contribute by sending us articles, reviews, opinions, rages, etc. You can also contribute by committing your women's liberation group to a page, either in each issue or in every other issue. This kind of commitment is the best way to make a mid-west paper of AIN'T I A WOMAN? The page can be articles (or any kind of printed material), pictures, drawings, cartoons, poems, etc. Fill it, lay it out; its yours! Write if your group is interested. We'll send details, deadlines, etc.

If your group wants to receive bundles of AIN'T I A WOMAN?, send 15¢ per copy. Minimum bundle: 20 copies.

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Don't Go

Did Go

When my mother discovered that I was a lesbian, she sent me off to a psychiatrist to make it go away. The stated purpose of that year was to get me to fit into society. Now, you may ask, "What's so wrong with that?"...But the whole argument that I should be fit into society assumes that it is me that has the problem and not society. How sane is a society which keeps millions of people starving, homeless, and out of work? Well, it took a long time to realize that such a country, and not its people, is very maladjusted. Unfortunately, I didn't know this then. I swallowed the psychiatry line, hook and sinker. I felt that I was the sick one and it was the worst kind of sick because it was inside my head and I could never get away from it. I would be just crying inside and everyone around me would be doing what they usually do and even smiling sometimes. I couldn't stand it! I wanted to scream at them for not being aware of how absurd their happiness was next to my pain. I would go up to my friends room and sit there wanting to put my head in their lap--to be comforted and free from it for just one minute. But, of course I couldn't. I couldn't admit that I was sick, that I was going to a psychiatrist, that I needed help, that I wasn't normal.

All year I worked to improve my concept of men. I went out with guys and tried to have a good time, but they were so boring. I was even considering marrying one to complete my "heterosexual adjustment". Thank goodness I did not because I was thinking of it just so I could once and for all be done with this problem.

One of the reasons that the year was so painful was that although my mind had been co-opted into desiring to become heterosexual, my feelings were elsewhere. In May I fell in love with a bass player who lived in the dorm with me. She and I were worried about what the shrink would say when I confessed, but he surprised us by declaring that it was all right to have interspersed homosexual relationships just so long as I continued along the Hetersexual Way. Anyway, the time finally came when he felt I was well on my way to being normal; he patted me on the head and sent me into the world. That was that. Once I got out, I realized how ridiculous it had been trying to be straight in a crooked world.

Did Go

Psychologists and psychiatrists used to speak truths to me. Now I hear their rigid, socially-condoned ideology that is based on and reinforces present inhumane attitudes and actions. Psychologists and psychiatrists used to look like saviors to me. Now they appear to be Pigs, perpetuating the values and standards of this Fascist , racist, imperialistic country.

The grossly counter-revolutionary goal of this noble profession is to help the individual adjust to society--to fit in to cease making waves! Pigshit! And to do this, they treat the individual...they treat the individual...as a guilty, suffering, maladjusted, freak stray. Obviously this is an Establishment, WASP influenced, analysis of where the problem lies.

When responsibility is placed on the individual, the society in which that individual functions remains aloof, blameless, and sits in judgement. Keeping the burden of change at the individual action level insures a lifetime of self-indulgence, self-analysis, personal guilt, shame, and degradation. Psychologists and psychiatrists don't seem to be interested in a broader analysis of collective guilt--they already have more patients than they can handle. The work and energy directed toward personal change might better be used in evaluating and changing a society which penalizes people exercising freedom of expression.

This profession is a Pig front. It stands for everything this society stands for and perpetuates those ideas through one-to-one controlled encounters. With an attitude of authority the profession guides beaten down, guilt-ridden, frightened victims back to the very society which caused these symptoms.

The audacity of these 5 to 10 year college-educated (what that's good for) people to sit in judgement of others, to manipulate feelings, to affect change of personality, to act as a god or otherwise knowledgeable being freaks me out. By studying the behavior of rats, and worse--by studying the behavior of fellow Amerikans, they think they've got humans figured out and are ready to administer virtually untested drugs that control consciousness, and play with attitudes and personalities. I object!

In "KINDE, KUCHE, KIRCHE as Scientific Law" Naomi Weisstein questions the reliability of 'years of intensive clinical experience' which is offered as the major support for psychological theories.

> The ability of judges, chosen for their clinical expertise, to distinguish male homosexuals on the basis of three widely used clinical projective tests-the Rorschach, the TAT, and the MAP-was no better than chance. The reason this is such devastating news, of course, is that...if what is considered gross sexual deviance cannot be caught, then what are psychlogists talking about when they, for example, claim that at the basis of paranoid psychosis is 'latent homosexual panic'? (p.4)

Their accurateness is vague, therefore dangerous to anyone placing themselves in their hands.

What about their effectiveness within present societal expectations? Quoting Naomi Weisstein again:

> In 1952, Eysenck reported the results of what is called an 'outcome of therapy' study of neurotics which showed that, of the patients who received psychoanalysis the improvement rate was 44%; of the patients who received psychotherapy the improvement rate was 64%; and of the patients who received no treatment at all the improvement rate was 72%. These findings have never been refuted; subsequently, later studies have confirmed the negative results of the Eysenck study. (Barron & Leary, 1955; Bergin, 1963; Carwright and Vogel, 1960; Powers and Witmer, 1951) (p. 4)

The validity of the entire profession as it exists now may be questionable.

My personal experience with counsellors, a psychiatrist and psychologists (male and female) lasted seven years. Their influence on me couldn't have been as great as they intended, or I wouldn't be writing this for a women's liberation paper and have the politics that I have. I did find out some things about my feelings and how to deal with them more honestly (with my two-year, female therapist). I like that that happened. It's had an affect that I'm comfortable with on how I relate to people. . .mostly women, because I like to relate mostly to women.

I never paid anything. I never cried. I lost my temper a little. I was frustrated a lot. They talked and I listened and we switched. I was never convinced by their persuasive reasoning for being a way that I was not, and did not want to be.

From my analysis, I conclude it is not a privilege, but a *RISK, for anyone to see a psychologist or a psychiatrist* because 1) their training and theories are unjustified by scientifically proven facts, 2) their reasoning is Establishment, therefore they cannot help someone who does not share Establishment values, and 3) their unquestioning loyalty is to the belief in helping all people adjust to arbitrarily set morals and values.

DON'T GO!!

Sorry We Went

When we got into Women's Liberation, we realized what psychiatry has done to women by trying to fit them into an oppressive feminine role that has been created by a sick male dominated society. It is destructive. It makes people channel all their energy into trying to solve individual problems instead of rising up together against the monster that causes them. For example, it drives women into shrink's offices to find out why they don't adore being cooped up with their children 24 hrs a day when they should be organizing neighborhood day-care centers.

This government makes life so hard that people have to make it the best they can. Lower class women know this. Psychiatry isn't open as an option for them because of its cost. Change costs money and money is what makes a difference in this country. If you don't have it, you can't control your own life. Lower class women see psychiatry for what it is-an indulgence. When you don't have the necessities of life you can't be worried about luxuries like whether your mind is in the proper order or not.

from the heart C.W.

The Chicago Women's Liberation Union is an organization of women who see the oppression of women as a significant crippling factor in our lives and the lives of other women, and as part of the generally oppressive socio-economic system under which we live. We have united to struggle against our common oppression, as well as to join in the fight against the oppression of others. The CWLU is composed of chapters of varying types in the Chicago metropolitan area, and functions through a steering committee composed of one representative from each chapter. The CWLU is consciously attempting to develop a humane non-manipulative organization; in practice this means that we are attempting to function through democratic, decentralized structure in which all chapters are consulted on policy decisions. The CWLU office is staffed by two unpaid, nearly full-time women plus volunteers from the chapters.

The Union has a number of important functions. One is that of facilitating communication, both in the city and nationwide, by means of the Union Newsletter and of the information exchange occurring through the office. It serves as a mechanism by which ideas and resources from groups across the city can be pooled to work on common actions and new analyses. It provides a central place to which interested women can be referred and through which new groups can be organized. The Union also provides a mechanism for meeting certain demands in a unified way, such as requests for speakers and requests from the mass media for interviews, etc., which are dealt with through the Union Speakers' Bureau and media committee.

Union chapters are varied in nature, including neighborhood organizing projects personal discussion groups, study groups, and other types of action groups. Chapters have virtually total autonomy in their actions, and thus may choose to carry out activities on their own, to cooperate in Union-wide projects, or to do both.

Women's liberation groups have been meeting in Chicago for approximately two and one-half years. Out of the experience of groups meeting in relative isolation from each other and attempting sporadic cooperation on specific actions or projects came the general feeling that a city-wide organization was essential to facilitate communication and cooperation. A conference and a series of mass-meetings were held this past fall, leading toward the ultimate founding of the CWLU.

Membership in the CWLU is open to all women agreeing with the substance of the Union statement of principles. Members are encouraged to affiliate with existing chapters or to create new ones in the belief that group work is more beneficial than work in isolation, but one can be a member-at-large if she so desires. Work with the WLU is NOT limited to members; non-members are welcome to work with the Union and the chapters on actions and projects, and are invited to get in touch with the chapters (this can be done through the office). Membership building is not a concern of the Union; reaching out to women is. Dues are not assessed on Union members, but members are encouraged to give whatever they can afford. Contributions from non-member supporters are welcome.

The CWLU believes that people are oppressed by the economic and political institutions of contemporary American society. This oppression is felt around us every day: through the war and the involvement of big business all over the world; through the state, which pours the resources of the people into protecting those business ventures through foreign aid, military expenses, and government contracts, which the basic institutions of American society---health, education, transportation, welfare---decay; through the deterioration of the environment caused by profit-dominated corporate policies; through the discriminatory practices which cause suffering for blacks, Puerto Ricans, the aged, women, American Indians, and other segments of the American population. This oppression is exercised in numerous ways, some of which affect women in particular.

Although capitalism exploits virtually the entire work force in one way or another, women form one of the major oppressed work groups. Women are hired for the lower skilled, lower paying jobs and are promoted less often than men, often standing by while less qualified men are promoted over them. Women seldom reach policy-making positions, and in fact are often systematically excluded from them. At all levels, women are often paid less than men for the same work, sometimes through the device of having two job classifications for the same work.

In the family, women are oppressed by the role of wife and mother. Women are expected, whether they have an outside job or not and whether they have one child or five, to be entirely responsible for the cleaning, repairing, cooking, shopping, washing, ironing, health, education, and child-care for their family. Whether they actually do the work themselves, are expected to hire and supervise others, or whether their husbands "help out," the primary responsibility remains theirs, and problems or crises are left to them to deal with. What this means is that tremendous amounts of socially necessary labor is performed free by women who are unpaid and unrecognized. It also means that children often don't have the chance to benefit from any intensive contact with men, and that men are deprived of significant contact with their children.

The present family pattern, in conjunction with discrimination against women in the labor force, also penalizes women economically. If a married woman chooses to work, she must either do all or almost all of the housework in addition to her outside job, or must pay out of her (already low) wages to have part or all of that work done. If she has children, the costs of child-care must come out of her earnings, and she must face the problem of inadequate and expensive child-care facilities. Women with children who, through divorce, widowhood, or whatever, must support both themselves and their children face even greater difficulties in surviving.

(continued on page 5...)

The Chicago Women's Liberation Union has been working since the first of the year to open a free women's health center. Part of the services offered will start the first of August; other things will follow as community support and funds are built up.

The center (not called a clinic for licensing reasons) will open with a series of informal educational meetings covering six general topics: (1) Sex education for teenagers, (2) Infant care, (3) First Aid, (4) Nutrition and diet, (5) Preparation for childbirth, and (6) Female physiology (including birth control and VD). All of the people organizing the classes are nurses, public health workers, medical technicians, or nursing students. The class leaders have been working with groups of six to eight women from the Union to plan the course and to teach them to be teachers. Each class will meet four times a month, on the same day of the week, and then the 4-week series will start over again the next month.

We expect other groups to develop out of these broad classes, and will help women from the community set up other classes to meet their needs.

As we have been lining up these meetings, we have been recruiting other people to volunteer medical services for when other parts of the center open. We have about ten doctors willing to give between one-half day and a whole day each week. Some are women, some are men; about half are gynecologists.

The medical services we will offer are pregnancy testing, VD testing and treatment, diagnosis and treatment of other vaginal infections, routine prenatal care, practical lessons in natural childbirth, routine infant immunizations, and abortion counseling (not advertised as such). We have located a hospital and a laboratory which will serve as back-up institutions, taking patients we can't help. Another important function of the center will be to provide patient advocates---women who help other women cut through red tape, find out what services are available elsewhere in the city, and actually help them to get them. Legal and financial advisors will be available, too, working with the patient advocate. This alone will make the center radically different from all the city clinics.

We are working on getting large grants from corporations, foundations, and churches; and this, as usual, is proving to be the hardest part of the work. We have had to write and rewrite proposals to iron out our vague points and polish everything up to meet incredibly high standards of superficial perfection. We have had to bull-shit a lot, which is an interesting experience when you-ve spent long months or years trying to get that tendency out of your system. So far we have a guar-

of the monster & L.U.

antee of enough money from Union members to allow us to sign a lease for a year, and that isn't enough to do much. Other people are trying to root out supplies, equipment and drugs, and we have a few good leads on these things.

The general concept of the center is a humane group of people treating each other in dignified, personal ways, and trying to recognize problems involved in getting medical care in a monstrous place like Chicago. We see the center as a highly political project, because it demonstrates a counter-institution; it shows how people can work together to meet their own needs; it debunks a lot of professionalism; and it shows women acting together for substantial social changes. The community chosen for the location is full of enormous challenges---it is Chicago's Southwest side, a fairly poor, mainly white working-class community, heavily Polish and Catholic, and is changing rapidly with patterns of Black and Mexican moving. Businesses are leaving, new things are opening, churches have a lot of influence, many women work, many men have two jobs, families are tight, everyone is overweight and in chronic need of dental care, abortion is a dirty word, there are no day-care centers, and the American Nazi Party isn't far away. We are trying to be realistic about the possibilities of actually operating a health center that does more than have educational meetings; some people think we will only stay open a month, others guess we could make it for a year. Harrassment is expected, probably in the form of frequent disruptive police and fire checks.

Some of the sisters working on the center live on the Southwest side, and have been working to arrange speaking engagements at church groups and PTA's and to get things in the community newspapers. For the rest of the Union women working on the center, the experience of learning about the problems of women from different backgrounds is greatly broadening our understanding of our oppression and making us identify with ALL women. We've done this intellectually for a long time, but it takes personal involvement to believe it and feel it down there. For those of us committed to the center project, this may be the most important thing that comes out of it.

Details of the class plans, materials used, and summaries of the discussions will be available to other women's liberation groups in early September. We will report regularly on the developments here and would like to be in touch with all the women's groups working on medical problems across the country. Please send questions, information or ideas to Women's Liberation Health Center, 2875 W. Cermak, Chicago, Illinois.

POWER to the SISTERS!

If a married woman chooses not to work, she then becomes economically dependent upon her husband for household expenses, clothing and personal expenditures, pocket money, and in fact, for physical survival. Not only does this oppress her by putting her physical welfare in her husband's control, but it oppresses her husband by requiring his full-time participation in the work force in order to "bring home the bacon."

A final major way in which women are oppressed is by the distorted and narrow definitions of women current in American culture. Women are seen as emotional, irresponsible and incompetent in relation to occupational, political, and sometimes educational achievement (although they are considered supremely capable of the socially crucial work or child-rearing and housekeeping). Women are treated as sexual objects by the mass media and especially by the advertising industry, which uses their bodies to sell cars, beer, cigarettes, deodorant, and a host of other consumer goods (while basic social necessities such as hospitals, schools, and clean air are neglected because of the fact that they are not "profitable"). At the same time, the exploitation of women as sexual objects leads many women to view themselves as inferior models who must continuously spend money on an always changing stream of the latest in wigs, cosmetics, and clothes in an effort to "shape up" to the media-promoted image of the desireable woman. This supports the profit-oriented, capitalist corporations, and at the same time adds to the problems of psychic survival women experience in our male-oriented, competitive society.

The CWLU sees this oppression of women as linked to the oppression of other powerless groups in society---

blacks, Puerto-Ricans, American Indians, youth, and the aged, for example. We see it as stemming from basic economic and political structures in American society, such as the fact that the entire economy functions according to what is most profitable rather than what is socially necessary or desireable, and the fact that the wealthy control such things as the major political parties and the media. Revolutionary social change is necessary to fully end the oppression of women as well as of other subordinate groups. In order to work toward this massive social change, and to lessen our present oppression, we are currently raising these issues:

(1) the demand for voluntary pregnancy, that is, for the ability of women to have children if they want, when they want, and as many as they want, and to refrain completely from bearing children if they so desire. This entails the demand to provide free abortions unregulated by law (there are no laws governing tonsillectomies; we see this as an analogous situation, but further demand that abortions be given free in accordance with the right of all to high quality medical care free of charge). This also includes the demand for significant research into the problem of safe and effective birth control, and for free and open access to complete information about the merits of various means of birth control, for men as well as for women. Finally, it includes the demand that no person ever be forced to submit to involuntary sterilization, and that persons wishing a permanent means of birth control can obtain sterilization at their own request.

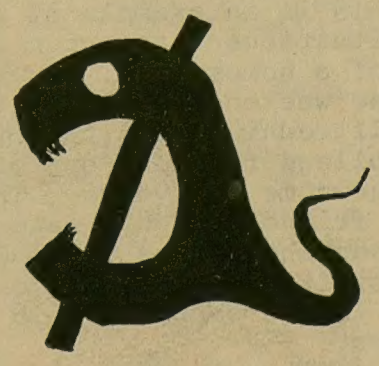
(2) Connected with the issue of voluntary pregnancy is the broader question of the nature of medical care in America. We challenge the profit-orientation of the drug companies; the elitest, hierarchical organization of the medical profession; the refusal of many medical specialists to give information to their patients and in other ways to deal with them hontestly; the direction of a research establishment which develops heart transplants but not safe birth control; and above all the failure of the American medical establishment to provide decent health care for all. We will work to develop programs calling this establishment into question, and raising the demand for good, free medical care for all.

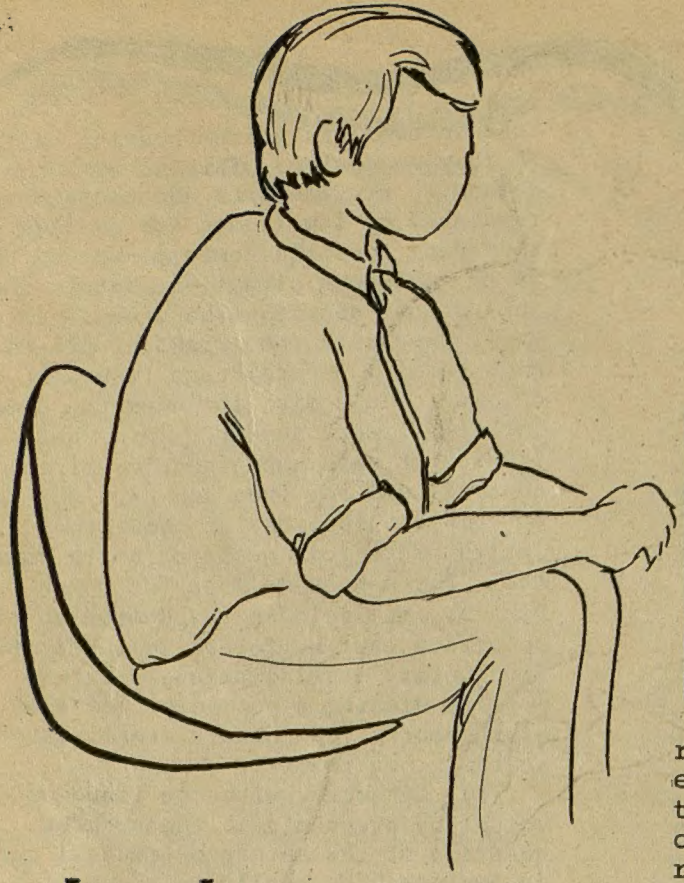
(3) Also linked with the demand for voluntary pregnancy is the demand that child-care be recognized as a social responsibility. The provision of free child-care centers open seven days a week, 24 hours a day (so as to be accessible to those women who work nights, weekends, etc.), staffed by well-paid men and women, and in control of the parents whose children are in those centers is our major demand at present. Ultimately, however, this point entials the demand that all children participate equally in the wealth of our society; a recognition that all children are social wealth, not the private property of their parents, and thus are entitled to an equal share of the wealth of society; and the sharing of what is now virtually the mother's sole responsibility for her child, not only by the child's father, but by the community.

(4) An end to economic discrimination against women. This means, obviously, equal pay for equal work, fair hiring and promotion policies, equal access to training programs, and, in order to make equality a reality, provision of such things as maternity leave with no loss of seniority, maternity benefits, and company supplied (but parent controlled) child-care. It also means dealing with the problems of the unpaid, unrecognized nature of women's work in the home, the accompanying economic dependence of the woman on her husband, and the often desperate economic situation of the woman without a husband---for whatever reason---who must support herself and her children.

We see our struggle as part of a struggle for freedom going on all over the world. We feel the need to unite with all those who seek control over their own lives, and particularly with women.

CHICAGO WOMEN'S LIBERATION UNION





GAY ExPeriences

high school

Cultivating homosexual tendencies in high school was too easy. You don't have to know that you are going to be a lesbian when you first start to dig being with a girlfriend more than anybody in the world . . anyway, I didn't.

Have you ever noticed that when you don't know what you're doing you do more? Naivete was my downfull for sure. I used to be casual about actions that society stereotypes as blatantly gay. Generally, high school was one really good friend after another with whom I had some very physical moments. That's what I mean about being naive. Neither one of us knew what we were classifying ourselves as by being as affectionate as we felt.

After three really close friends and myself had gone through a time in our respective relationships of this physicality, I recognized a pattern in my friendships. My friends, apparently not confiding in one another, only saw the uniqueness of the experience for themselves.

I immediately took on the burden of guilt. LIFE AND LOVE FOR TEENAGERS prescribed psychiatric counselling though they also stated that prognosis for cure was very low. Let's make a point of rewriting the chapter on homosexuality after the Revolution. It made me feel hopelessly dirty and sick. I became suspicous of any uncontrollable emotions and motives my strange new self might have.

It was at that time, too, that I became very inhibited about being touchy with female people -- for fear of spreading my disease maybe. No one thought anything of feet or hands or heads touching at slumber parties --no one but me. I even stopped playing basketball because I was afraid if they saw my body in the shower room they would somehow figure out what immoral disease I carried.

I was really afraid. What had gone wrong with me? Was there any thing wrong, or was it just coincidence until then? I tried not to dwell on it. There were lots of girls who were willing to be my friends, that's why cultivating this habit was so easy. I was just conscious of my 'tendencies' when we were in conducive situations; which was too often!

By my last year in high school, having experienced intense loving relationships with females and the expected but superficial flirtatiousness with males plus their cold, meaningless sex, I began to recognize how unjust society is in declaring normalcy to mean heterosexuality for all. I resented the double standard which I became aware of gradually through closer examination of my guilt.

I concluded, and still believe, that 1) no person has a right or obligation to judge another's morals and behavior; 2) no group of people has a right to force its beliefs on others, penalizing rejection of these values with humiliating and severly demoralizing labels and their consequences; 3) this society does not encourage female people to develop to their greatest potential.

After forming these opinions, I was off on a more serious trend of relationships — the real kind. I no longer feel guilty - I'm angry. After sneaking, hiding, lying, running away, awkward encounters with friends and parents I'm convinced I'm not acting more irrationally than they make me act or they are acting themselves.

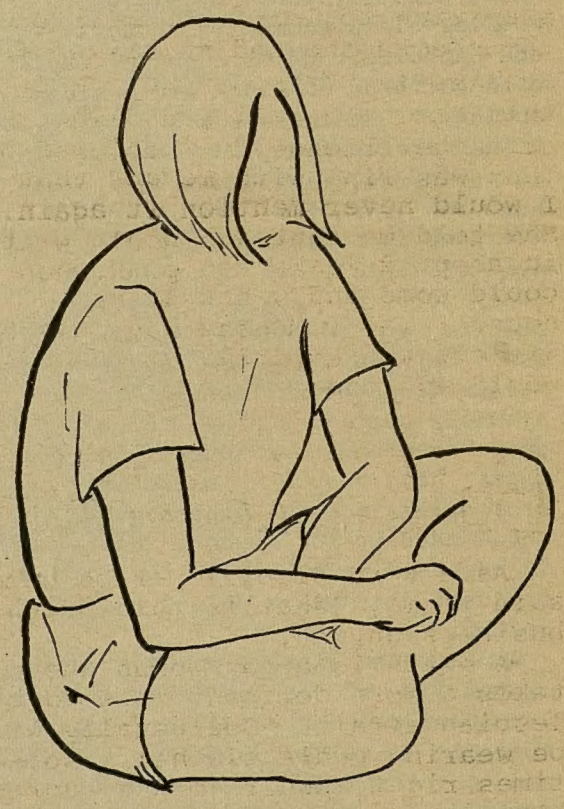
AccePtance

I've briefly asked myself what being Gay has in common with the fight for Women's Liberation. At times I've felt that my being a member of WLF may even be hurting the group because some women might hesitate to join if they think that the group is just a bunch of "Man-haters". But I decided that there was a common bond and have equated the two (WLF and being gay) on the basis of respect. As long as I'm a woman, i.e., human being, I deserve a certain amount of respect more or less dependent upon if I'm personally worthy and have earned it. Yet, as soon as I say I'm homosexual, in some eyes I immediately become a low animal if not hated, at least pitied. Therefore, as long as I'm a woman and am being cheated of my right for respect, my plight, even though perhaps in a different form, cannot be separated from the oppression and degradation of all women.

This is an example of one of the situations that occur in the life of a homosexual.

One weekend there was to be a small reunion with two of my old college friends, one of whom had known me for years. The other friend couldn't make it that weekend but we two made the best of it, talking over old times like a couple of old biddy gossips.

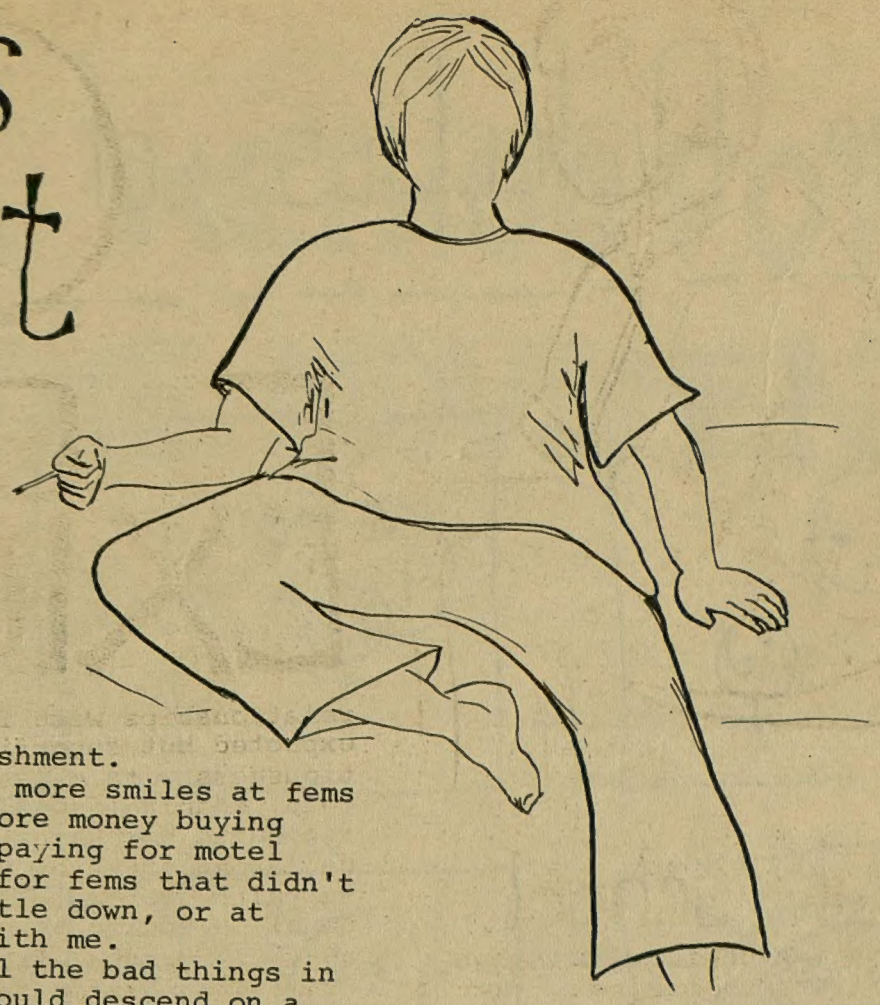
Since my love life really couldn't be talked about as I never told her about my being Gay, I turned the conversation to who she was dating. She was happy to go into great detail, and I was relieved as this took the burden of the conversation off of me. Then she proceeded to tell me about some weirdo who was window peeking in her apartment and another one who was making obscene phone calls; both of which I could understand her being upset about. Through this part of our conversation she used the word "pervert" about 30 times (no exaggeration). Although not once did she use it in relation to female homosexuals, each time she said it I cringed.



I wondered if she would call me "pervert" if she knew how I felt about women. Finally in the middle of her conversation I stopped her. I said, "Look, I'm going to tell you something, but I want you to remember while I'm telling you this that I'm the same person you've always known and will be afterwards -- I'm homosexual".

She never even blinked. She started talking in short, fast bursts. "Oh really?," "I'd have never guessed it." Then I could see a change coming over her face as it started sinking in and she said, "If you lay one hand on me I'll knock you silly." Seeing as I hadn't even moved except for my eyes watching her hands and face, the menacing tone of her voice and the fear in her eyes would have been ludicrous if not for the fact that a minute ago this was a smiling chatty friend of mine.

the Sisters Speak-Out



I assured her that I wouldn't touch her and tried to explain that because I was homosexual didn't mean that I went around attacking other women but that I preferred the company of women and when it happened that 2 of us liked the same things, could talk, maybe even enjoyed arguing with each other, just like heterosexual couples - then - and only then - could there be"sex".

I'll have to grant her this, she tried her best to understand. Once she realized that I wasn't going to rape her she started questioning me about how I felt, and why I was what I was, etc.

It became apparent though, that she didn't understand. Some friends that I had asked to join us for dinner called to say they would be out shortly, and when I mentioned their names, Bobbie and Joe, she very seriously informed me that if they were two girls she was leaving. When a man and a woman showed up she was visibly relieved.

That night she slept in my bed and I slept on the couch knowing that she would sleep fitfully, listening for my step.

In the morning as she was preparing to leave she blurted out the speech she had memorized for my benefit, "If you never mention this again, I won't, and we can still be friends." I assured her that was fine with me and that I would never mention it again. She told me that she would write in about 2 weeks and plan when I could come and visit at her house . . . . Months have passed without the word that I knew would not come.

Butch to Woman

As a very special person once said to me, "What is this butch business anyway?"

A butch is a gay woman who takes a more dominant role in a lesbian affair. She usually will be wearing men's clothes...sometimes right down to men's shorts. You'll recognize her because she appears to be a woman trying to be a man. She'll sometimes be in competition with men over women. I know because I was a butch. I cut my hair short and combed it as much like a man's haircut as I could. I walked bowlegged-- guess it made me feel tough. I was ready to defend at any moment, sometimes almost looking for a fight just to prove that I was a big butch even though I was scared to death.

I wanted to be a stud--in other words I wanted to please many women, but most of all I wanted one woman to love, support and defend. Of course she had to meet certain qualifications. She had to be tiny, good looking and blonde. She had to be able to cook, wash, iron, and keep house--also handle financial affairs--I hate that! Most of all she had to want only me, jump at my slightest command, and never look at another butch, liable to severe punishment.

I wasted more smiles at fems and spent more money buying drinks and paying for motel rooms--all for fems that didn't want to settle down, or at least not with me.

After all the bad things in life that could descend on a person had descended upon me, some friends of mine introduced me to this girl. Ugs--some friends--she was skinny, no make-up, her hair was a mess, flat chested, and not too friendly-looking either. After a long debate (about 5 minutes) I decided she was a little uneasy so I poured on my charms and bought her a few drinks. Well, the more beer I had the better she looked, so I decided to see what I could do for this one. I took her for a drive in the country. I kissed her once, then I took her home. What if she liked me? Then I would have to take her out again and there was no way. Oh well, guess I should be nice and ask her out again so I wouldn't totally crush her. Not to mention that I was pissed because she was falling asleep. The date was made for the next night--a birthday party for a dear friend of mine. At least there would be lots of people there, and I wouldn't have to talk to her much. She wouldn't even acknowledge me at the party, just sat in her own little corner and drank. Since I was feeling pretty good I started to move in. Total shut down. I mean my good intentions and honest feelings were really crushed. Well let me tell you that was the last time I saw her, for a while anyway. My roommate kept seeing her, and I was beginning to feel a little angry and I wasn't going to let it go at that. I tried for another date. This time it would be going to a gay bar just for fun as friends and nothing else--she consented. I picked her up that night and wouldn't you know it out came the cutest little butch I had ever laid eyes on. I swallowed my heart, and drove off. I had an interesting evening--looking for some fems. Well we became pals and one evening under the stars she said to me, "What is this butch business anyway." I damn near swallowed my tongue. This girl wasn't a butch or anything, she just hadn't been around. So I told her how I felt. She wasn't about to be owned by anyone. I found out later that she was afraid of me because of my masculine, dominant, possessive traits. What she wanted was a woman. I did a lot of hard soul-searching and let a little of the softness in me come out. You know we started out new. She began to be less frightened of me and I began to really fall for her and so our relationship began.

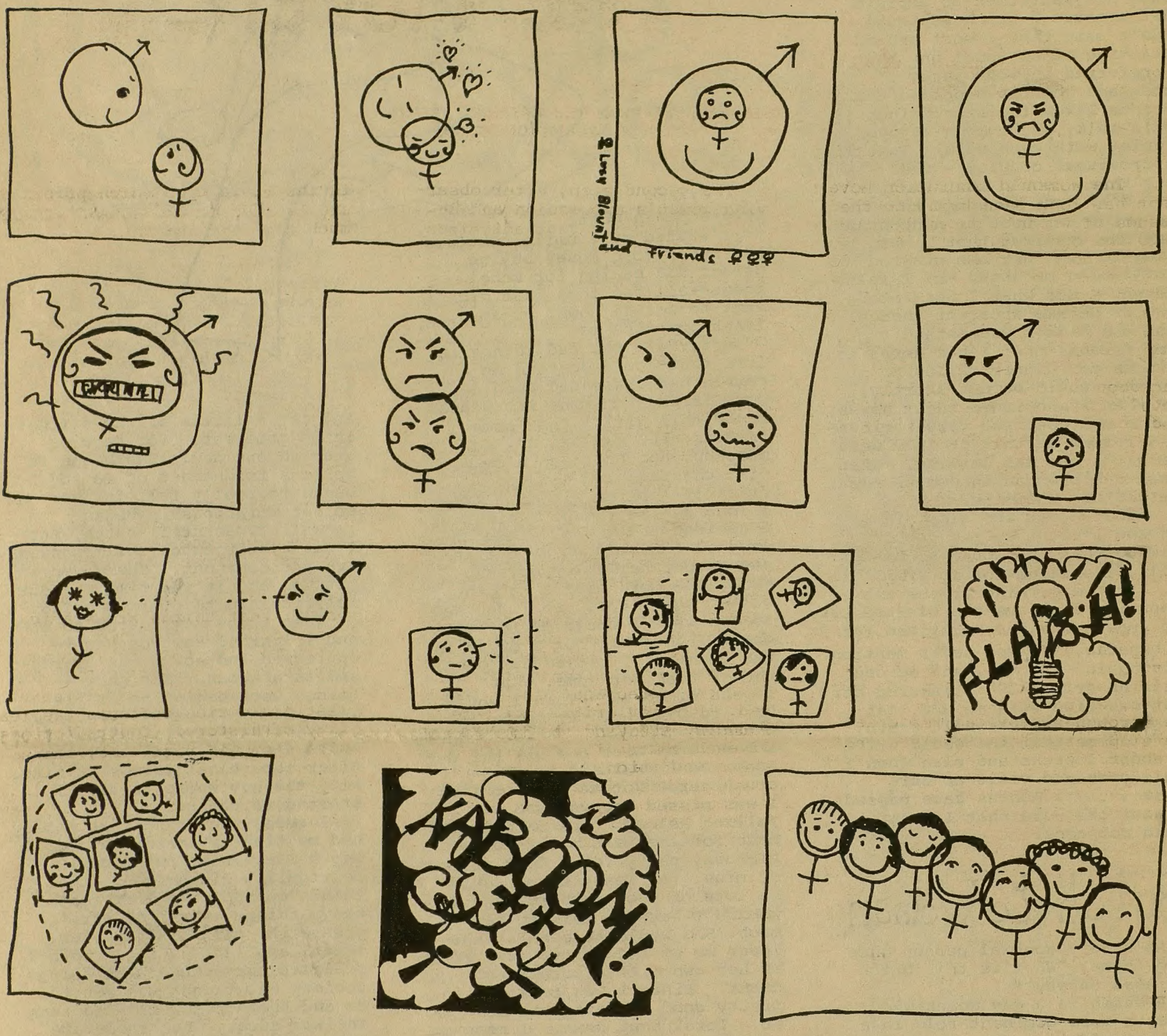
Well I was still butch, but I was a soft butch still possessive and dominant. She moved in with me and it was time for our relationship to start growing.

Then I was introduced to WLF and I learned how women were oppressed and how I was oppressed as a woman. You know -- things were beginning to fit into place. I was a chauvanistic bastard. I was guilty of oppressing the woman I loved. After some conciousness-raising with the gay women in WLF, I started to change.

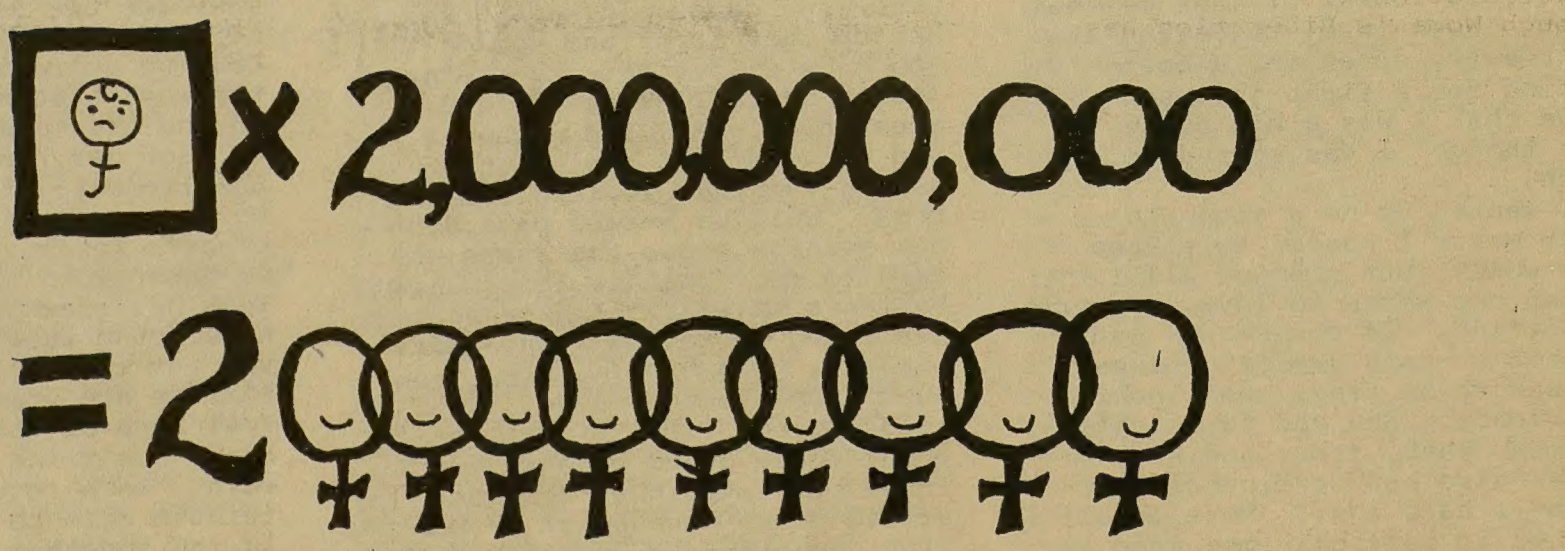
I guess the thing that really had me tied up inside was feeling guilty about being gay. I felt guilty liking to do the things men do like lift the heavy things, wash the car, grease the car, fix the electrical appliances, etc. Then I realized that these were things society has taught the men to do and that if a woman did them she was queer. But these are things that need to be done and anyone who can do them and wants to can and should!

Sure I still wear men's pants and shirts because I find they are cheaper, built better, and fit better--not because I want to pass for a man. I am not possessive over the woman I love anymore. She is a woman. She has a mind of her own and can make her own decisions. I have no right to tell her what to do. We share equally in all the work that needs to be done and neither one of us is afraid to show our feelings. We are complimentary to each other. We share and recognize each other's needs. Needless to say, we have grown together. Our love has grown and matured. We have found that there is no reason for the butch and fems--that we are women in love. We feel none of the guilt that society has tried to inflict us with. As a result we can contribute more to society separately and together.

The Dialectics of Liberation (Step One)



THE MORAL



THIS PAGE IS FROM GRINNELL
WOMEN'S LIBERATION FRONT

A METHOD FOR THE MOVEMENT

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WOMEN'S LIBERATION FRONT

The Women's Liberation Movement has long been bringing the issues of women's oppression out into the open, hopefully for education and free discussion. But it is time for women to face these issues (usually defined by men as women's problems) in a critical and analytical way, a way which will assure that these issues are not forgotten or thrown to the background of a male dominated revolution. The process of dialectics as defined in Mao Tse-tung's essay, "On Contradiction," offers a valuable model for such an analysis of where women stand, and where we should be going.

Lenin said, "Dialectics in the proper sense is the study of contradiction in the very essence of objects." This sentence defines what we will be doing in analyzing WL by the dialectical method. First, we will be observing and examining contradictions, or opposites, which reveal themselves to us through historical, material development. This involves understanding the principles of universality and particularity, and being able to identify the two aspects, or opposing views within each contradiction. And second, discovering that contradictions lie in the very essence of things, in our bodies and our minds, in the system which binds us, in the institution of marriage and the institution of sex, we will analyze the dynamics involved as priorities emerge and aspects are transformed into their opposite.

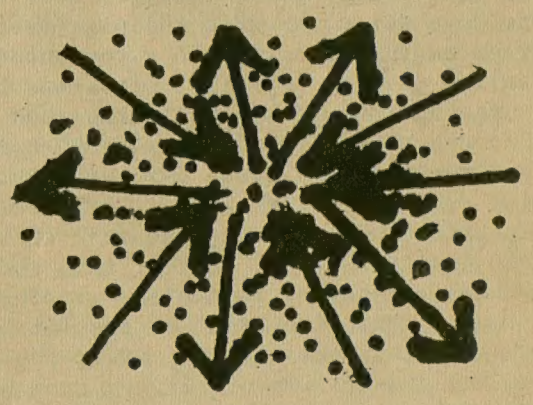
As women, we have already gone through the first step of observation. For centuries and centuries we have been observing our own oppression and the oppression of others. But that observation has been blurred over the years as we began to accept our oppression as natural and good, thereby accepting only one side of the contradiction within us. Even though Women's Liberation has helped to define these contradictions, we must continue to look, delving deep into each thing to reveal the very most basic contradiction. What are some of these contradictions? Some are easily seen, like the contradiction between a woman's ability to do a job, and her salary for doing that job. Or a woman's performance in pre-med school and her difficulty in entering medical school. Going deeper, we can see women's powerlessness in a world of power-oriented decision making. Or women's natural kinship to each other and their forced separation. Or women's concept of themselves and what they want to be, as opposed to what society defines them as and expects them to be.

The second step, after observing women's oppression and defining the basic contradictions, is to understand the universality and particularity of each contradiction. Universality means that contradictions exist in all things and are interdependent on each other. The struggle between the two aspects of each contradiction is the force which causes growth and change. So anything void of contradiction is a dead thing. Interdependency of contradictions is evident in the fact that women cannot isolate the contradictions within themselves as not affecting the rest of society, that is, men. By particularity we mean, that each contradiction involves a particular essence which defines it as separate from other contradictions. It is very important to be able to discover these particularities, since they will determine how each contradiction is to be faced and finally resolved. Particularities will be found by studying the two aspects of each contradiction in its concrete condition. This involved studying both sides of a contradiction, such as, our need for control over our lives, and the reality of no control over our lives.

At this stage of our analysis, important variants appear. Because of the dynamic quality of each contradiction, seen in its constant movement and development, the two aspects involved are unequal. Women are often put down as unable to perform certain jobs which they are trying to get, while at another time in history (like WWII) they were forced into such jobs. This illustrates why it is important to view a contradiction in its historical perspective and consider it as a dynamic and ever-

moving force. This also applies to the relationship between whole contradictions. Some contradictions will always emerge as more important than others, although they will constantly change places within this system of degrees. Understanding this concept is essential to any revolutionary action or policy development. It is the basis upon which priorities are decided on and so must occupy much time and thought.

After a long and complex analysis of the contradictions we see as women, what will be the end result, and what will make it worthwhile? Mao sees the worth of the dialectical method in what he calls the identity and struggle of the aspects of a contradiction. This is simply going back to the basis of the dialectical method--change. Under certain conditions, the two aspects of a contradiction can transform themselves into each other. The ruler will one day be the ruled and the last will be first. Those who do not want change in society try to exert the opinion that this does not occur, that things are static and motionless, that changes occur only in quantity and not in quality. But history proves that this is wrong and materialist dialectics reflects the reality of history. Contradictions will struggle until they transform themselves into each other or unite into one, thus forming a new contradiction with two new aspects.



The Women's Liberation Movement has passed the time of complaining and hopelessly looking on as both capitalist society and the New Left continue their oppression of women. We ourselves must begin to take the contradictions we see seriously. We must recognize their application to the whole of society and their interdependence on all other contradictions we sense around us. We must also recognize their particular significance and implications, since only this will lead to the effective solution. We must study and analyze the whole range of contradictions so as to establish priorities and deal with realities And we must come to believe that change is the natural order of things under certain conditions, and we alone can and will create the conditions for this change. Analysis will lead to awareness, awareness to struggle, and struggle to revolution (resolution).

-Susan Preston
Grinnell WLF

I have a strange reaction when I travel from Iowa City to somewhere else--especially supposedly more important places: I want to brag. Or have our actions or our words show these Easterners how together Iowa City Women's Liberation is. Then I wonder if all this isn't elitist and I get all mixed up.

But when we went to NYC a couple of weeks ago, I discovered that it wasn't elitist at all--just a reaction to being ignored. When the sisters go to a meeting or something in a big city, and tell where we're from, the reaction we get is: "My goodness, Iowa City! Isn't that wonderful." (meaning: Wow, I didn't think they had even heard about Women's Liberation in Iowa.) So no wonder I sit through the meeting trying to think of something heavy to say so everyone knows that we think about all this stuff too.

I guess it was wrong to go to NYC looking for answers as I probably subconsciously did. They, however, would never think of coming to Iowa City for answers. Anyway, I went to NYC with two purposes in mind: to see what Gay Liberation Front is into and to observe how the RAT collective works collectively. Well, I found that the RAT collective is having more trouble working collectively than we are, and are even wondering if they should continue to print. (You should. We all love RAT.) The Christopher Street Gay Liberation Days were nice but not very well organized and we could have learned alot more if there had been workshops planned. My reaction was that we should have a conference and show 'em how it's done. But, of course, nobody from the East would come because they'd probably think all we'd do is pick corn.

BIG CITY LITTLE CITY

People who are involved in WL in small cities seem to have some preconceived notions about people in WL in large cities and vice versa. Certainly the problems, methods of communication, organizing tactics, etc. vary depending on the size and character of the area. After having been involved in WLF in Iowa City for nearly a year and making a short visit to New York to see some of the people in WL there, some of the differences are very clear.

In the first place, women from smaller cities can easily fall into feeling that they are less obvious than sisters and groups from big cities. Usually the national media features groups and actions which are happening in places like New York, Washington, Chicago, etc. We sympathize with sisters from those places who have to put up with the pig press, Dick Cavett, and the rest of the gang. After having been through a few encounters with some people, we've seen that dealing with the straight press has been a real drag.

Perhaps one of the most dangerous mind-fucks in this country is the notion that everything that's "anything" happens on the coasts. It's the kind of myth that romanticizes those far away places and the people who live there. I think many sisters must feel that they are likeimitations of what's happening in the big cities or following the lead of bigger or more well known places. Most often this isn't the case. Out of this comes the idea that we may not be quite as politically together as sisters in other places.

For a long time, most of the literature that was around just reinforced this mythical regional elitism. Most publications came out of the big cities. I can see the possiblity of sisters from more obscure places lacking the confidence or the facilities to begin circulating their ideas in the movement. The development of women's underground papers have helped quite a lot since we've had a chance to read what other women are into and see that in relation to our own groups. Papers like the liberated RAT, Off Our Backs, It Ain't Me Babe and now Ain't I A Woman? have been lifelines to isolated groups in small towns. In the past, there were times of not really seeing many signs of a mass movement or any support at all.

The trip to N.Y. did a lot to clear up a lot of mistaken notions, both for us and for the sisters from N.Y. First of all, we were living proof that there is WL in Iowa City and all over the midwest and that we're into the same things that N.Y. is. And the trip was a high for us--to know that we aren't running behind, trying to catch up with people, that we're struggling at pretty much the same levels as people from big cities.

Most important to remember is the fact that we want to wage a revolution. Just how we do this is crucial. Those of us working in smaller communities often have more time and comfort to work out a lot of stuff that gets lost in the tensions and busyness of large cities. Our contribution in this way will be a valid one. I don't think that we should lose sight of the fact that walking to and from our business we do not see ghettos, that we have lots of white frame and green, and that we have more time to work out a lot of personal things uninterrupted by sisters or brothers being busted everyday, by political schisms, or difficult communication problems. This is a privilege we have. We can use it well by doing what has to be done that our sisters in large cities may find impossible or we can indulge ourselves in a privilege we have little right to.

Once when freaking out on having absorbed too many people's frustrations including my own, I started walking. Each building that stood so staunchly before me, appeared sterile. They seemed to compensate for something someone wanted and could not have. All the structures seemed stripped back to frustration--and the atmosphere made me feel I'd landed on another planet.

Maybe those are the terrors of a city person, as I come from the east, N.Y., where you can't touch anything without considering first the shit that might cover it--but it was something more basic. Survival in the city stems from largely different kinds of needs. Like nature, the city is unpredictably destructive. Some mugging at the corner. Yet that kind of survival depends on avoidance rather than nourishment. And to do that you must never let anyone know what your weaknesses are or they'll beat you more. Respect, your own and everyone else's, depends on holding yourself together and keeping enclosed. Pride becomes the name of the container--I can keep everything in and no one's finger will touch the cracks in my soul. That leads to a value of personality based on virile strength--I am better than that which I conquer--myself.

But hell, I don't like those types of people, or the parts of myself that are like that. More concerned finally in hiding the cracks than showing the positive side of self. But what of the country. A friend of mine from the west once said country people know there are things a person can't fight--when the ocean's rough you don't go against it, you follow it's lead. And that applies to people. They need to fight themselves and one another less because they are more directly concerned with their own and their friend's survival. The body and the mind's motion is directly attuned to the process and goal of the action. Calling this "real" connection or "wholeness" belittles it, and to some extent I have a tendency to romanticize the quality of self motion in cooperation with a process and an end that I see in country people. Besides, people look more together from the outside than they in fact feel--so for me to say they talk more with actions and their bodies than with words is not quite right. None of that's quite it, and I'm rather confused as is obvious, about the difference.

Which leads to the knack both city and country people have of being intimidated by the other. City people often think country people are more together or else too dense to understand them and subtler things. Country people think city people are interested in abstractions that mean little or nothing or else that the city people see something they are missing--that they have imagination. At least I have watched such games be seriously played by city and country people. It finally becomes ridiculous each trying to justify their own life in what they consider to be the other person's terms. So I think it difficult for each to adapt to the other style of life, for each existence calls the value of the other into question. But I think people will become less uptight when they no longer think the other person's additional vision has led them to perceive the appropriate value system. For finally nobody has the foggiest idea, least of all city people who make up their rules with their fertile imaginations.

" FLEECING THE PRESCHOOL SHEEP ... "

big business cashes in on day care

We came in early with the commuter traffic to get to the Hotel Commodore where the big conference on whether and how big business (toy makers, "educational" materials makers -- like films, books, etc. --, established chains in day care like Mary Moppett, and others involved such as educators and market analysts) should begin investing in early learning and day care.

We came because we felt a need to demonstrate that this kind of approach to people's needs is all wrong. Big business has not just had a sudden revelation that people need day care and therefore moved to act; rather, it has seen that in many communities people are moving on their own to establish day care for their children and seen in this a possibility to move in, run things their own way, and make tidy profits.

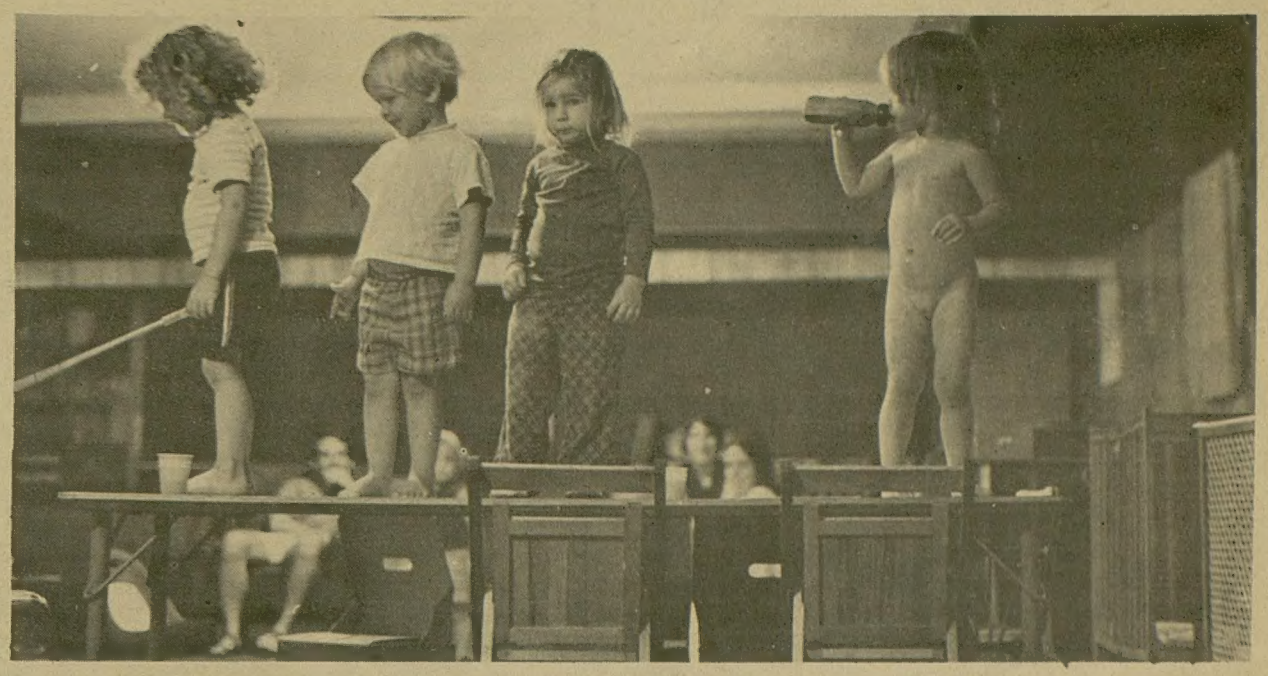
We have day care centers established. There are two in Iowa City. There are a dozen in New York. They are parent-controlled. They are free. They are staffed by parents and unpaid volunteers. They are running on donated or borrowed space and supplies. They desperately need funding. The most dedicated volunteer will eventually have to give up if money does not come from somewhere.

How ironic! As we are struggling to survive and give our children decent and loving attention, we took a few days off to be amazed at a conference at which delegates who had paid $225 each came to discuss how they could set up NON-parent-controlled, Profit-operating day care. Corner on the market!

ACTION AT THE COMMODORE

The Commodore is right next to Grand Central Station. As we arrived we were leafletted with a statement from the women and a schedule of the conference. Outside the hotel entrance was a moving picket line, well-stocked with signs: FREE DAYCARE FOR OUR CHILDREN! OUR LAMBS SHALL NOT BE FLEECED! (this particular sign was prompted by the title of one of the talks: "Fleecing the Preschool Sheep").

New York, Boston, and New Haven women had come together. Word passed around: move up to the conference area in small groups. We did, past a florid hotel manager (hey! come on, now, hold it, just get out of here....) keeping cool, just drifting up. There were monitors after a fashion who were responsible (as much as possible) for signalling when a bust was coming. The



strategy meeting the prior night had decided to avoid a bust. When about 50 women got upstairs the signs came out and the press towards the doors began. It took about 3 minutes to get in; women took over the stage and lined the walls with their signs.

It was so easy that we felt somewhat adrift as to what to do; some women took turns at the mike presenting our case: that child care is a service which should not be available only to those who can afford to buy it; that child care must be motivated by love and care, by parental concern and activity, not by profitability; we extended an invitation to visit our already established centers; we told them we needed money.

Actually, nothing that clear probably came across to anyone. The conference was in fact disintegrating to chaos as delegates, various factions of the women, and, soon, children accompanying the women challenged each other.

The conferees were trying hard to keep their cool, to be accommodating. First they invited 3 women to stay for the rest of the conference, then 4; then a 10-minute recess was called and we were all invited to stay on the undiscussed premise that we allow the presentations to be given and save our attacks for the "proper time" and remain courteous (a rather naive assumption since few if any of the women had the slightest idea of conference etiquette). It didn't work. Argument. Outburst. Children screaming. We were called racist cop-outs. They were called fascists. We demanded money. 75¢ was collected. Pig photographers got thrown out. The hotel people looked very worried. Some delegates were outraged. Some were amused. Some were right on.

Many delegates seemed "well-you-may-have-a-point-and-I-am-sincerely-interested-in-finding-it-out-but-can't-you-be-more-orderly?" It was really hard for me to believe that all these people had no idea of what was going on, no idea of why we were angry, no idea of how desperate we are for continuing our centers on the ideals on which they are founded: love for the children, completely parent-controlled, FREE! I couldn't make up my mind: were they really so ignorant or was this a big PR show? In any case, they really wanted to get out of that mess. And they pulled a good tactic. They recessed for lunch and left the women the room. We were getting ourselves together for a badly-needed strategy meeting when word came in that pigs were in formation outside.

We split. Groups went out singing the beautiful song:
CHILDREN POWER TO THE CHILDREN PEOPLE!
WOMEN POWER TO THE WOMEN PEOPLE!
PARENT POWER TO THE PARENT PEOPLE!
STOP WALL STREET! POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

Iowa women went to Grand Central and ate sandwiches and then went back to check out the Commodore. Three pig cars outside, the conference had been moved to another room, and no one without credentials got past the man with the gun.
We decided to get down to the women's center where a meeting was gathering. Eventually we reached a consensus to stage a strong picket, at least in the early morning, to pass out the remaining leaflets and to let them know we were still there. A list of unfunded centers was drawn up to be passed out.

And that was the extent of our involvement with this action. I'm left with definitely mixed feelings. The women were not together on the action; there were really no plans for what to do if the conference were liberated. In so far as such a conference should never have been held in the first place, though, we contributed a lot to messing it down.

We have so damn much to do! We have to define our needs, where we hurt and why we hurt;and WHO in terms of EXISTING PEOPLE is our enemy? Should I assume a person is an enemy until he proves himself a friend (and most of the delgates were, of course, "he's")? We have so much getting together to do! ALL POWER TO THE BEAUTIFUL RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE PEOPLE! AND LOVE TO OUR SISTERS...

The new abortion law in New York has no residency requirement, allows abortions up to the 24th week of pregnancy and after the 24th week "under a reasonable belief that such act is necessary to preserve (the mother's) life."

Hospital preparations have been inadequate, personnel and equipment lacking in many hospitals, and city health code requirements make it unlikely that many clinics or doctors' offices will be used for abortions in New York City.

The Medical Society of the State of New York has recommended a doctor's fee of $100 to $150 for the 10-30 minute out-patient abortion. Many doctors will charge more, hospital and laboratory fees are additional.

Like everything else in the health system, abortion reform favors the rich. The woman who can pay up to $800 for an abortion now can get it legally. ($350 for the hospital room, tests, and operating room fees $250 for the physician and $120 for the anesthesiologist--or $750 in one reported case already.)

Covert guidelines imposed by hospitals (limiting the number of abortions to one a week in one case) add to the problem of access to abortions.

The Women's Project is working against that part of the new state law which forbids hospitals to train paramedical specialists to perform abortions. The Project provides doctor and referral services, housing and other aid to women from out of town. Later they may be performing pregnancy tests at a cost, if any, of $1.75 The Project has some doctors who will perform abortions for a fee of $50, but a suitable office or clinic must be found.

Support for the Women's Abortion Project would aid women from out of town. Phone (212) 691-1860; 36 W 22 St., New York, N.Y 10010.

Clergy and Lay Advocates for Hospital Abortion Performance is an organization taking complaints from women who have trouble getting an abortion. It will record "how and why the system breaks down." (212) 477-0034.

Planned Parenthood provides doctor and hospital referral service: (212) 777-4504 or 777-2015.

The Abortion Counseling Information and Referral Service, a commercial agency, guarantees a hospital bed and "an available board-certified gynecologist on a specified date." It claims to charge no fee to a poor New Yorker and up to $800 depending on the case, the institution and the patient's ability to pay for others: 160 W. 86th St., New York City. (A commercial agency? Somebody better check this out.)

The WLF Medical Cell will try to find out how these services are working. If you know, let us know.

Our Ad Policy

The Woman as consumer is one of the most evil of the sexual stereotypes laid upon woman. Most advertisement plays upon this stereotype, reinforcing it at the same time. The old cry of "Buy, Buy, Buy" must be replaced by advertisement that limits itself to a simple statement of what is offered to the public. We join other women's liberation publications in accepting only non-exploitative advertisements.

Ads are limited to a maximum length of 2". Each ad costs $5.00 each time it is run. All advertisements must be paid for in advance. We reserve the right to reject any ad.

Medical Morass

The medical issues cell has been meeting for nearly two months now. Our meetings seem to have taken on a pattern. At the first couple of meetings we talked about the medical profession in this country. It wasn't too hard to pinpoint the problems... they are so obvious that they stick out like a sore thumb. (People of the medical profession pardon me for infringing on your territory.) In our preliminary discussions we had a pretty good analysis of the situation. Medical care is a class privilege in this country. If you've got the money you've got adequate care and attention. Doctors are guarding their professionalism with their lives. Sexism and racism are running rampant in the hallowed halls of hospitals and clinics that serve people everywhere. Female nurses are expected to follow male doctors like puppy dogs with slave-like devotion and obedience. Woman are denied the right to make decisions about their own lives. The medical people (along with legislators) are killing thousands of women by not getting rid of this system's archaic abortion laws. People are often kept in the dark about the safety of the kinds of medications they are taking (OK doc, you can pass some of that guilt off to drug manufacturers). Doctors are refusing to go into ghettos to treat people because they are not treated courteously. Third world people are being experimented on to find new methods of contraception. When the man talks about curbing the population he is going to make damn sure that he cuts down in all the right places! I keep putting off medical and dental examinations because they are too expensive. I could go on and on...

So after we had the monster pinned down, we started making suggestions about alternatives. So now we spend the first half of our meetings making proposals. The only catch to abortion counseling, which is being done, is the $350 minimum per abortion which most middle class women (let alone lower class) have little chance of scraping up, and no one is willing to give them.

Free Medical tests: We could offer free service to people... pap smears, pregnancy tests, etc. But where do we get the expensive equipment? Doctors are too busy with their patients who pay to give time to a free medical center. We can train our own people, but we will need a lot of help first. Free contraceptive information and advice: We have the information, it's the prescriptions and the examinations that cost the money. There is no Planned Parenthood in this town, and the nearest one is some fifty miles away. The University clinic charges money, and I haven't heard of any doctors who will do examinations free. The only way you can have free medical attention is to be on ADC and in the area of contraception that's a little after the fact. But then! I guess we should be thankful for small favors since the student health service here just this past year decided that maybe they should stop giving a moral lecture and give contraceptives to females requesting them. Thanks a million for the pill!

The second half of the meeting usually drifts into other subjects. We aren't talking about medical issues anymore. Instead we discuss the day care center, or we speculate on what will happen with the New York abortion law. (New York is pretty far away.) Occasionally some of us drop the meeting altogether and go out to get stoned. We do just about everything under the sun you can think of to do when you can't deal with a situation.

It's the kind of frustration that we're feeling at this point that makes people so enraged. Big medical business has things sewn up so tight in this area that we can't even get a foot in the door. But we're angry enough now that we're not going to stop trying. And our anger is not going to disappear... it's going to grow. The mystique of medicine is gone, and the automatic respect for the great white doctor is being turned upside down.

Free and good quality medical care for all people! And that's only going to come with the Revolution!

AD

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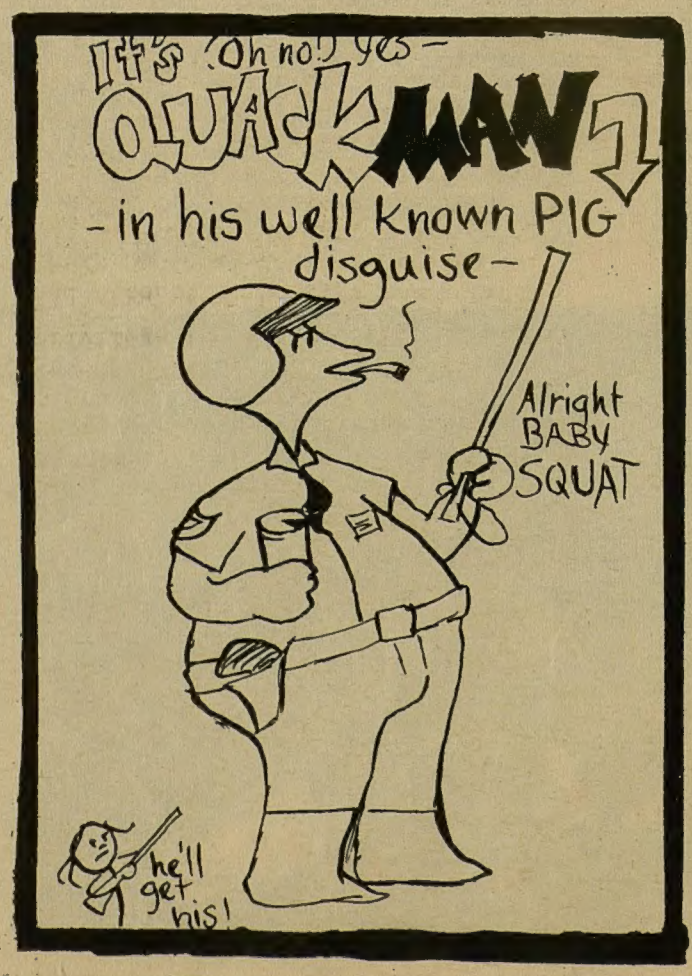

Worker's Union

A NOTE FROM THE STAFF OF THE FORMER SOUTHERN FEMALE RIGHTS UNION
(Frances Hebert, Judy Harden, Kathy Bragg, Roxanne Dunbar, Susan Farris)

The Marxist reading group in New Orleans includes women who have been meeting as a women's group for more than a year, and has been joined by other individuals. Several women who are now associated with SFRU joined the reading group a few months ago.

Due to our studies in the group and practice in SFRU, we have arrived at a different political direction than we formerly held. We have dissolved the organization and discarded the name. We are now working towards building a New Orleans Female Workers' Union. Some of us are getting jobs in industrial, lower clerical, and service work in order to join with working class cadre to build a working class base for the women's movement in this area. We believe that this is the direction the women's movement in general must take to truly serve the liberation of women and all oppressed people.

PERIODICALS, READING LISTS & A CONFERENCE

Off Our Backs
P.O. Box 4859
Cleveland Park Station
Washington, D.C., 20008
sub: $6.00/yr; singles: $.25

Aphra
Box 355
Springtown, Pa., 18081
sub: $3.50/yr; singles: $1.00

Everywoman
6516 West 83rd ST.
Los Angeles, Calif., 90045
sub: $2.50 for 10 issues

The Female State: A Journal of Female Liberation
Female Liberation
371 Somerville Ave.
Somerville, Mass., 02143
singles: $1.00

It Ain't Me Babe
W.L. Office
2398 Bancroft Ave.
Berkeley, Calif., 94704
sub: $1.80 for 6 months

Notes from the Second Year:
Radical Feminism
P.O. Box AA
Old Chelsea Station
New York, N.Y., 10011
singles: $1.50

The Pedestal
307 W. Broadway
Vancouver, B.C., Canada
sub: $1.50/yr

Rat
241 East 14th St.
New York, N.Y., 10008
sub: $6.00/yr

Up from Under
339 Lafayette St.
New York, N.Y., 10012
sub: $2.50 for 5 issues

Women: A Journal of Liberation
3028 Greenmont Ave.
Baltimore, Md., 21218
sub: $5.00/yr

New England Free Press
791 Tremont Street
Boston, Mass., 02118
literature list

Radical Education Project
Box 561-A
Detroit, Mich., 48232
literature list

Redstockings
P.O. Box 748 Stuyvesant Station
New York, N.Y., 10009
literature list

Lucinda Cisler-annotated reading list of 600 items on women-$.25
102 W. 80 Street
New York, N.Y., 10024

MONTREAL--Sisters in Montreal Women's Liberation would like to have a working conference of North American women's liberation groups to coincide with a trip to Montreal and Toronto of North Vietnamese women who have specifically asked to meet women involved in W.L. This could be the start of a coordinated women's movement sharing serious self-criticism about where we started, what we've learned, where we're at, and where we're going. These sisters want to know what you think of such a conference (to be held sometime in October), and what form you would like it to take. Is there a better place for the conference than Montreal (they think Canada would be better because the Vietnamese sisters and Cuban sisters--if they can come at all --can't come to the States)? How many would come from your group? Can you contribute or raise money for it?

For more information contact Montreal Women's Liberation, 3837 St. Laurent, Montreal 131, Quebec, Canada, 514-844-5838.

(Reprinted from Off Our Backs)